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which reason, on the contrary, announced to be the whining of a hound in the kennel. While in this state of exciteable uncertainty, all at once, and with a crash, the window shutters burst open, and I saw, as it were, a white form dart through, and descend from the window, and pass into the room—guess, Sir, my agony of terror—I hid my head under the bed-clothes—every pore of my body burst into a profuse perspiration, and thus I lay almost choked for want of breath—a pitiable specimen of an unmeasured sinewless coward—at length sense and reason rallied, and I asked myself, Caspar, are you a man? Fie on you, Caspar Oufle, rouse yourself. So in an agony of desperate reaction, I burst out from bed, rushed towards the door, which I hastily opened, and here rushed by me, and between my legs, a large white cat, from whose emerald eyes fire flashed as she cantered down stairs. The fact was, that on the huge old-fashioned ledge that divided the sashes of the window, grimalkin had fixed herself, in order to watch the birds that roosted in the adjoining ivy, and long confined to her position by the window-shutter, she had made a successful effort to escape. It is needless to say that I retired to my bed, and released from my terrors, slept soundly. But was all this any reason for me to renounce my belief in apparitions, because I was in this instance disappointed? No, Sir, quite the reverse; it has confirmed me in my congenial credulities; and it still forms much of my conversation, and much of my studies, the theory and science of demonology, witchcraft, ghost-seeing, &c. &c. and I do wish, Sir, I had you in my study at Fairyfield, in order that I might display before you as goodly a collection of works on alchymy, astrology, demonology, dreams, divinations, and occult science, as is, perhaps, possessed by any adept in this kingdom.

I remain, Sir, your most obedient servant,
CASPAR OUFLE.

CHRISTMAS TIMES—THE ANNUALS.

When, looking back through the mists of years, the mind dwells upon the happiness and the festivity which Easter, Hallow-e'en, and Christmas times brought to our ancestors—and when in fondness our memory turns to those scenes which, ere change and innovation had wrought their perfect work, in the days of our boyhood marked the drama of life and gave the holiday of the heart—and when with them we contrast the dull monotony with which time now marks its course—in bitterness of spirit, we exclaim, "Here, at least, the march of intellect has done too much." Had it confined its sweeping progress to the highways of life, well—but to break down all those fair hedges which beguiled the tedium of the path!—this was too much. It is true, that the revolving seasons now, as heretofore, still bring with them All Hallows Eve and Christmas-day, and that nuts and apples still mark the presence of the one, and a plum-pudding, perhaps, the brief existence of the other; but these are only the cold, inanimate resemblances of things which once moved before us in all the beauty and energy of life. The sportive mirth and the happy faces with which they were once associated, are gone; and we look upon the remaining spiritless observances with a melancholy pleasure, similar to that which is produced by the pale, marble lineaments of a departed friend; and we are ready to inquire, what real benefit has resulted from this curtail-

ment of the enjoyments of youthful minds—ay, and of maturer ones too?—for few and worthless are they who could not for a while forget the number of their years and the evils of them, and participate in the those sports of childhood which indicate the care-free heart, and which cast a magic charm around the social hearth. Many may say that the fountains of wisdom, rather than the passing radiance of pleasure, should be poured forth for those whom we see “rising around our board like olive plants;” but we feel, that while the one should be admitted, the other need not be shut out. Far be it from us to permit to the child of our affections an unbridled pursuit of self-enjoyment; but that mania of mental regimen, which with our sons would make philosophy and spoon-feeding coincident, and which would render our daughters perfect “blue stockings” before they are capable of mending their white ones—may be carried too far; and until we can succeed in that difficult art of putting “old heads on young shoulders,” we should not become radical reformers on the question of amusement. By the way, talking of heads, we should like to know whether it could be shown that the improved system of juvenile education has caused a consequent improvement in the size and shape of the cranium?—since, if it could be proved that the cerebral developments of the rising generation indicate a higher degree of intellectual energy than that manifested by children of a century ago, the cause of phrenology would be materially benefited. But what has all this to do with the Annuals? Perhaps it has much more connection with them, than that which subsists between the generality of modern reviews and their text books—though this may be saying little on the subject. Well, then, it indicates a change of habits among the people—to meet which the caterers for public taste have exercised their skill in bringing forth another and more valuable description of toys, than that with which our grandfathers, when in petticoats, were rewarded. The humming-top and Chinese puzzle, and all those objects of juvenile admiration, which German and French ingenuity produced, are giving place to trifles of a more intellectual cast, in which the powers of English heads, and hearts, and hands, are displayed, and which must have no inconsiderable influence in early awakening a literary taste. “Ce qu’on nomme libéralité, n’est souvent que la vanité de donner,” is a French proverb; but the vanity of giving is a charge to which the present age does not appear very obnoxious. And yet we know not a more spirit-stirring thing than the “gift of a friend.” The reciprocity of feeling that it produces is sweet and advantageous to both parties. The words, in an old ballad, “He gave me the tobacco-box, marked with his name,” if they do not indicate the poetry of imagination, at least display that of feeling. And to have a book, marked with his name, whose memory may be interwoven with our inmost and our fondest thoughts—to have such a book, bringing as it were again into existence scenes whose reality we can know no more, and reuniting those bands which circumstances have broken, but which exist still in our recollection, even as when a unison of taste, of feeling, and of joy seemed to make two souls one—such a book, we say, is no mean treasure to a sensitive mind. Who is there that would not prize the evidence, however humble, that he held a place in another’s breast?—and who is there that does not feel a stirring of the heart at the bare mention of some volume which circumstances have linked with his most delightful feelings? Associations of this kind form the small cords which hold the affections to the earth, when the stronger chains have been irreparably snapped asunder; and therefore it is that we should

lament a decline of that *present-giving* spirit by which our fathers were possessed. Those who may be inclined to mark the coming season by presenting tokens of esteem, will find no impediment on the ground of the paucity of suitable publications; for the Christmas collection which has just issued from the press is such, that the most dissimilar in taste and age may each suit their fancy. In sober truth, however, we think that existence has been given to quite a sufficient number of these ephemera—upwards of thirty of the species having been generated in the sister islands. Should they continue to multiply, they will produce the effects of an old-fashioned Christmas dinner—we shall become sick from too much of a good thing. But, lest any of our readers should be inclined to make the same remark touching this good matter we have been inditing, we shall cut short the thread of our discourse, and proceed to make a few extracts.

In doing this, we would simply premise, that, speaking of them generally, the illustrations in all we have looked into are very respectable—some of them are decidedly excellent; but we must confess, that the sameness which is apparent in many of the plates has an unpleasant influence on the eye; while many poetic pieces far below mediocrity, and several ill-told and thrice-told tales operate in some degree against the generally respectable character of these volumes, which, notwithstanding, must still be allowed to be highly creditable to the individuals connected with their several departments.

THE IRIS is a strange medley of religion and fictitious narrative. It contains, however, several well written pieces in prose and verse—the former, “The Curse of Property,” by Mrs. Hall, is decidedly the best. The illustrations are good, if we except “The Madonna and Child,” which is an unpleasant and unnatural piece, though painted by Corregio himself.

JUDAS RETURNING THE THIRTY PIECES.

BY THE REV. THOMAS DALE.

Still echoed through the dark divan,
The shouts that hailed the doom of blood,
When lo! a pale and haggard man
Before the stern tribunal stood:
He strove to speak—awhile his breath
Came fitful as the gasp of death—
Nor aught these hollow sounds express,
Save guilt and utter wretchedness.

Yet in his wildly glaring eye
Such fierce unnatural brightness shone,
They deemed some outcast maniac nigh—
Some victim of the evil one:
Even the high-priest, in mute amaze,
Fixed on that form a shuddering gaze.
As if a spectre near him stood,
That chained his eyes and chilled his blood.

An instant, and the stern old man
Grew cold and reckless as before;
A moment flushed his aspect wan,
It pass'd as in a moment o'er.
He knew the form that trembled there—
Knew whence that madness and despair;
And the brief awe his brow had worn,
Changed to a smile of withering scorn.

There on his knees the traitor fell—
 There dashed to earth the price of blood ;
 And twice essayed his tale to tell,
 And twice the o'er-mastering fiend withstood.
 Faltering, at length, his accents came—
 Words more than anguish, worse than shame—
 " Oh ! I have sinned—I have sold
 The guiltless blood for guilty gold ! "

Then curled that proud priest's lip of scorn—
 Hate flash'd from his indignant eye—
 " And go," he cried, " thou wretch forsworn—
 Accursed live !—unpardoned die !
 The deed is done—the price is paid—
 For him thy coward soul betrayed :
 His blood may sate the wrath divine ;
 But who, foul traitor, recks of *thine*."

He heard : and with a frantic yell
 Of agony and wild despair—
 With guilt that not a Cain could tell,
 Remorse that not a Cain could bear—
 He rushed—oh ! whither ?—Human eye
 Saw not the doomed apostate die.
 He fell,—unpitied, unforgiven,—
 Outcast alike of earth and heaven.

THE AMULET is a very creditable volumè, taken as a whole ; although the poetry does not in a single instance soar above mediocrity. The illustrations are excellent. We were pleased to perceive, that this volume exhibits more of a literary and less of a religious character than heretofore. We would have every thing in its place, and a place for every thing (as a certain *Friend* would say)—and therefore, though we think amusement should have a religious *tendency*, we do not see the advantage of giving it such an *appearance*. The gown and bands would be out of place in the festal hall—while the Christian demeanour would grace it. These books are taken up for amusement, and he who finds them interlarded with matters of a spiritual nature, feels like a man, who, going to a theatre, hears a sermon as a portion of the performance. As in the *Iris*, an Irish story by Mrs. Hall, "The Dispensation," is decidedly the best in the volume. From the prowess evinced by our fair country woman in the literary lists, we are satisfied that she is qualified to run a tilt or break a lance with the best blue-stocking knight in Albion or Scotia ; for while several of the English lady writers in the *Annuals* are evidently draining the very dregs of their intellects, the later productions of Mrs. Hall exhibit a more than usual purity and brilliancy ; her last are decidedly her best. We are glad to perceive that her representations of Irish life afford as favourable a view of the national character, as would be consistent with truth. We fear, however, that she is too scrupulous of offending a particular class, too numerous and too powerful in this country, whom it would be only fair to paint in their true colours, "without partiality and without hypocrisy." In this respect, she should be bold, and with unhesitating hand give to every character those shades which truth may require. Besides this, we may intimate, that we should be sorry to find her turning *Miladi Morgan* on our hands, saying of the Dublin ladies things for which she has no warrant, particularly as, when we once had the good fortune to meet Mrs. Hall in this potato land of ours, she appeared just as fond of "a bit of finery" as any of our Dublin *belles*.

SONG—FROM THE AMULET.

BY MISS JEWESBURY.

She's on my heart—she's in my thoughts,
At midnight, morn, and noon ;
December's snow beholds her there,
And there the rose of June.
I never breathe her lovely name
When wine and mirth go round ;
But, oh ! the gentle moonlight air
Knows well the silver sound.
I care not if a thousand hear
When other maids I praise ;
I would not have my brother by
When upon her I gaze.
The dew were from the lily gone,
The gold had lost its shine,
If any but my love herself
Could hear me call her mine.

ACKERMAN'S FORGET-ME-NOT.—The stories which pleased us most in this beautiful little volume—several of the illustrations to which are really splendid—are the “Adventure in Italy,” “The Banshee of Shane,” and “Haunted Chamber;” the last of which is by far the best. Some excellent pieces of poetry, also, are to be found scattered through the pages.

THE FALSE ONE.

BY T. H. BAYLY.

I knew him not—I sought him not,
He was my father's guest ;
I gave him not one smile more kind
Than those I gave the rest :
He sat beside me at the board,
The choice was not my own ;
But, oh ! I never heard a voice
With half so sweet a tone.
And at the dance again we met—
Again I was his choice ;
Again I heard the gentle tone
Of that beguiling voice.
I sought him not ;—he led me forth
From all the fairest there,
And told me he had never seen
A face he thought so fair.
Ah ! wherefore did he tell me this ?
His praises made me vain ;
And when he left me, how I long'd
To hear that voice again !
I wonder'd how my old pursuits
Had lost their wonted charm ;
And why the path was dull, unless
I lean'd upon his arm.
Alas ! I might have guess'd the cause,
For what could make me shun
My parents' cheerful dwelling-place
To wander all alone ?
And what could make me braid my hair,
And study to improve
The form that he had deign'd to praise—
What could it be—but love ?

Oh ! little knew I of the world,
 And less of man's career ;
 I thought each smile was kindly meant,
 Each word of praise sincere :
 His sweet voice spoke of endless love,
 I listen'd and believed,
 And little dreamt how oft before
 That sweet voice had deceived.
 He smiles upon another now ;
 And in the same sweet tone
 He breathes to her those winning words
 I once thought all my own.
 Oh ! why is she so beautiful ?
 I cannot blame his choice ;
 Nor can I doubt she will be won
 By that beguiling voice.

THE MARINER.

BY MRS. ELIZA WALKER.

Soft glides the sea ;
 Bounding and free
 Dance the blue waves as they rush to the shore ;
 O'er vale and height
 Gleams the moon bright,
 Gaily the mariner plies the swift oar,
 Singing the while—Ere the sun light the main,
 Land of my birth, I shall greet thee again.
 Night wears away ;
 Sullen and gray
 Frowns the dark sky o'er the wild, restless deep ;
 Lightning's red flash,
 Thunder's loud crash,
 Now quiver and peal. Go, mariner, weep ;
 Haply, I deem, though the sun lights the main,
 Its rays to thy land shall not guide thee again.
 Tempests are fled ;
 Morning hath shed
 Light from her eye, and balm from her breath—
 All things rejoice ;
 Where is the voice
 Of the mariner now ? It is silent in death :
 The vessel went down ere the sun lit the main,
 And he trod not the land of his fathers again.

ACKERMAN'S JUVENILE FORGET-ME-NOT.—With the exception of the frontispiece, which is a striking portraiture of infant beauty, there is nothing worthy of remark in this little annual. Several of the plates are very good, and one or two of the poetic pieces pretty ; but, on the whole, we think it not exactly the description of book which is calculated for young persons of a sufficient age to read the sublime, or prize the beautiful.

THE SEASONS.

BY JOHN REID, ESQ.

'Tis merry, 'tis merry in smiling spring,
 To gather the fragrant May ;
 When the blithe young birds on the green boughs sing,
 And the lambs in the pasture play :
 And flowers look out from their circling leaves,
 To allure the wandering bee,
 Oh ! happy then is the hand that weaves,
 Sweet mother, a wreath for thee.

'Tis merry, 'tis merry in summer hour,
 When the skies are all too bright,
 To chase the fawn thro' the clustering bower,
 That stays his frolic flight :
 Or with fearless breast to brave the stream,
 Where health and sport are won—
 Alas ! that ever youth's fairy dream
 Should glide as swiftly on.

'Tis merry, 'tis merry in autumn tide,
 The leaser's toil to share ;
 Or from bending boughs the golden pride
 Of the beauteous year to bear.
 Yet, oh ! be sure that as fruit will fall,
 And the ear give out its grain,
 Life's harvest tide none can e'er recall,
 If its hour shall pass in vain.

'Tis merry, 'tis merry at Christmas time,
 When logs in the chimney blaze ;
 And the board is heaped with the winter's prime,
 The long loud laugh to raise.
 Yet, when friends are kindest, each feeling heart
 The friendless will ope to cheer ;
 And of heaven's rich store give forth a part,
 To hallow the closing year.

MRS. HALL'S JUVENILE FORGET-ME-NOT.—Although the plates in this are by no means so good as those in Ackerman's, nor the poetry, generally speaking, so pretty, still we would prefer it as a juvenile present. We are decidedly of opinion that neither of them is precisely suitable to the readers for whom they were produced. For such the articles, both in prose and verse, should be more select and of a particular character.

THE IRISH MAIDEN'S SONG.

BY BERNARD BARTON.

Though lofty Scotia's mountains,
 Where savage grandeur reigns ;
 Though bright be England's fountains,
 And fertile be her plains :
 When 'mid their charms I wander,
 Of thee I think the while,
 And seem of thee the fonder,
 My own green isle !

While many who have left thee,
 Seem to forget thy name,
 Distance hath not bereft me
 Of its endearing claim :
 Afar from thee sojourning,
 Whether I sigh or smile,
 I call thee still, "Ma vourneen"—
 My own green isle !

Fair as the glittering waters
 Thy emerald banks that lave,
 To me thy graceful daughters,
 Thy generous sons as brave.
 Oh ! there are hearts within thee
 Which know not shame or guile,
 And such proud homage win thee—
 My own green isle !

For their dear sakes I love thee,
 Ma vourneen, though unseen ;
 Bright be the sky above thee,
 Thy shamrock ever green ;

May evil ne'er distress thee,
Nor darken, nor defile,
But heaven for ever bless thee—
My own green isle !

FALSTAFF'S COMIC ANNUAL.—This is a curious production ; and in saying this for it, we do all we can in its favour. It is a matter of much more difficulty to construct cleverly such a book as this, than to hit off character, or arouse the sympathies, by a well-told tale. The parties concerned, the circumstances which give rise to it, and the manner of *saying* it, are the *minutiæ* which give a main portion of its worth to the *jeu d'esprit*, when uttered ; but to *write* a joke well is *no joke*, and to write it ill is worse than no joke. Had his audience known that Sheridan's most brilliant flashes, like Franklin's electric fluid, had been cunningly prepared and sealed, and stored up for state occasions, they would have fallen almost powerless upon the ear, and been accounted as "things flat, stale, and unprofitable." To that strange faculty, by which the mind, from an impulse as it were, and without any apparent pre-conception, bodies forth its sportive creations, their effective, and we might say, magic influence, is to be attributed—in the instantaneousness of the touch, lies the startling power. Many, no doubt, will be pleased with this little candidate for "broad grins"—but we confess that it is not much to our taste ; for we think that bad wit, like bad wine, is the better for being absent. Some of the wood-engravings, however, are well designed, and really laughable—the specimen which we give of the poetry, is almost the only piece which would *tell* without their assistance.

THE BLUE-STOCKING BELLE.

Lord Cabandash loved a young lady,
A belle of the "stockings of blue,"
And many a subterfuge made he,
To obtain her permission to woo.
My lord was a lover of ladies,
And bright eyes liked better than wine ;
Had seen all the beauties of Cadiz,
And those on the banks of the Rhine ;
Had sighed to the fair in the city,
And vowed to the belle of the ball ;
Devoted himself to the witty—
But the blue belle was dearer than all.

Like a ghost, this fair one he haunted,
Wherever she went would repair ;
Near her in the church he had chaunted,
And mingled his sighs with a prayer.
A box at the opera had taken,
To see and be seen by "mamma ;"
His elbow at Crockford's had shaken,
In hopes to be known to papa ;
And thus, every means he invented,
To know and be known to the fair,
Fate somehow or other prevented,
Save when she was taking the air.

She, like an invisible fairy,
In parties was not to be seen,
But would in the park, when unwary,
Flit by like a shade on the green :
Then after her carriage he capered,
To try to o'ertake her he flew ;
She saw how he started and vapoured,
Like one with the *fic deloureux*.

But, like the fair flower she resembled,
She modestly hung down her head;
Turned from his wild gazing, and trembled,
And conjectured his reason had fled.

He heard she was all love and duty,
Profound, too, in classical lore;
He saw she was young, and a beauty,
And what would his Lordship have more?
Not to love the fair fascination,
What argument could be deduced?
Alas! to his heart's palpitating,
He never could get introduced.
A friend offered soon to present him—
As soon as the blue belle came out—
Who told him, "he sure would repent him,
Ere to leap he should first look about."

At length, nothing more could delight him,
A ticket was sent for a ball:
"Hope deferred" now came to requite him,
And happiness seemed to recal.
With rapture he dwelt on the meeting,
And all the fine things he would say;
In fancy he pictured her greeting,
Her eloquence how she'd display.
In speaking, and blushing, and smiling,
He thought on the fair of his choice;
Above all, how sweetly beguiling,
The eloquent tones of her voice.

The pains which he took in attiring,
The twisting of this way and that;
He puzzled himself with admiring
The tie of his unique cravat.
His hair was brushed up a-la-Brutus,
His whiskers were cut to the tip.
As fierce as the fam'd William Rufus,
Mustachios curled over his lip.
With puffing and stuffing and wadding,
And, wasp-like, pinch'd in at the waist,
Completing his figure by padding,
He call'd for his carriage in haste.

But, oh! when the ball-room he entered,
Not thinking of sorrows to come,
To address his beloved he ventured,
And found to his grief—*she was dumb*.
Her mother was sitting before her,
Applications began on to preach,
And told her devoted adorer,
That her daughter was wanting in speech.
From her presence distracted he flew,
Leaving this for her mother to tell—
"Let her stockings be ever so blue,
I never can wed a *dumb belle*!"

LADIES' COMIC OFFERING.—We scarcely know what to say for this volume. It is, however, as we are informed in the preface, the first effort of a young lady, Miss Louisa Henrietta Sheridan—by the way not a bad name for an author—who, besides writing "the whole of the literary portion," and designing "the numerous illustrations," laboured under the serious disadvantage of being limited to less than one-half the time on which she had originally calculated for its completion. Taking all these circumstances into account, therefore, it would ill become us, being of Irish origin, to say anything unkind of the lady or

her production ; and as we are sure every reader will feel disposed with us to make every due allowance, we would strongly recommend it to their notice, as a first effort, and as containing many good things in its way, especially in the prose department, with several wood engravings of a humorous character. "Married and single," and "Single and married," are decidedly the best of the prose pieces : and the following we select as a fair specimen of the lady's poetic skill and humour :—

TRIED FRIENDS.

A man went to settle at Botany Bay—
 This passage not *free of expense* I assure you ;
 John Bull-like he followed the scheme of the day—
 To colonize, though not sent by a jury.
 The first thing he did was to purchase some ground ;
 And became soon acquainted with Smith his near neighbour,
 Whose farming attempts with success had been crown'd,
 And whose system effected great saving of labour.
 For instructions in farming our Newcome relied
 On this settler, whose house was at half-a-mile's distance ;
 To him in all troubles he always applied,
 And derived from his knowledge the greatest assistance.
 He sent for him once, but the servant returned,
 Saying, " La ! zur, the gennelman's most mad wi' joy !
 ' Tell your maister, ' zais he, ' I can't come, as I've learn'd
 My wife has just brought me a beautiful boy ! "
 Johnny Newcome set off the new father to see,
 Quite pleased with the tidings his servant reported,
 And bouncing straight into the parlour, said he,
 " My man has just told me that *you were transported* —
 " With joy " he *intended* to add ; but the other
 Snatch'd his hand from his grasp, saying, " Sir, leave the place !
 No excuse ! — I'm provoked ! — and if *you* were my brother
 I'd say, let me never again see your face ! "
 Poor Newcome was shock'd at the way he was spurn'd,
 And inquired in the town why this man was so warm :
 Smith *had been transported seven years* he there learned—
 And a hint at this fact always called up a storm !
 For the space of three years they were not reconcil'd,
 Till a friend undertook the desired explanation ;
 And so well he arrang'd it, that Smith again smil'd,
 Telling John he would pardon the rude observation.
 For since they had formerly been such allies,
 He now felt convinced he intended no harm !
 So with many kind questions and friendly replies,
 Away to Smith's cottage they went arm in arm.
 As gaily they chatted while walking along,
 John spoke of the phrase which had caused his affliction :
 " But I see now, " said he, " *you're convinced you were wrong,*
 And I ever shall hail with delight *your conviction !* "
 " Conviction ! " the other one furiously cries—
 " Leave my presence this instant ! — nor dare to intrude
 On a man you've endeavoured to wound by your lies,
 And to whom you so spitefully try to be rude ! "
 With grief Newcome turned, but he saw 'twas in vain,
 To reply to a person so quickly offended,
 Who would not attend had he tried to explain
 A word used at *random*, not *rudely* intended !
 So he left farmer Smith in retirement to mope,
 While Newcome in future kept watch o'er his tongue ;
 And from that day to this he *ae'er* talked of a rope,
 When a person was present, whose father was hung !